

Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9540

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJ: DUTCH BICENTENNIAL EXHIBIT TOURING IN US

1. SECRETARY GENERAL OF MFA EMILE SCHIFF HAS JUST INFORMED EMBASSY OF DUTCH GOVERNMENTS GREAT CONCERN REGARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR DUTCH BICENTENNIAL EXHIBITION IN US. HE EXPLAINED THAT DUTCH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAD ENTERED INTO CONTRACT WITH SMITHSONIAN PROVIDING NECESSARY PROTECTION FOR EXHIBIT AND FOR ITS SAFE DISMANTLING, TRANSPORTATION AND REASSEMBLING AS IT MOVES ABOUT IN US. UNFORTUNATELY, SMITHSONIAN, ACCORDING TO DUTCH, HAS NOT CARRIED OUT ITS PART OF THE CONTRACT IN SATISFACTORY FASHION. ALREADY SEVERAL VALUABLE VASES ON LOAN FROM BOYMANS MUSEUM IN ROTTERDAM HAVE BEEN BROKEN AND APPARENTLY THERE HAS BEEN OTHER DAMAGE. ACCORDING TO SCHIFF, SMITHSONIAN HAS TURNED OVER TASK OF HANDLING EXHIBIT TO PRIVATE TRUCKING FIRMS THAT DO NOT HAVE NECESSARY EXPERTISE IN HANDLING EXHIBIT OF THIS TYPE.

2. SCHIFF SAID DUTCH AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO TAKE UP THIS MATTER ON URGENT BASIS BOTH WITH DEPARTMENT AND SMITHSONIAN POINTING OUT THAT IF PROPER ARRANGEMENTS SAFEGUARDING EXHIBIT CANNOT BE MADE THERE IS SERIOUS RISK THAT SOME OF CONTRIBUTORS SUCH AS RIJSMUSEUM AND BOYMANS MUSEUM WILL WITHDRAW THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS, WHICH WOULD END DUTCH BICENTENNIAL EXHIBIT. SCHIFF HOPED EMBASSY COULD ALSO CONVEY TO DEPARTMENT SERIOUS CONCERN OF GON OVER THIS SITUATION AND IN PARTICULAR EMPHASIZE THAT IF EXISTING PROBLEMS WERE NOT SOLVED, TOUR OF

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DUTCH EXHIBIT WOULD END IN CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOULD

BE EMBARRASSING FOR BOTH GOVERNMENTS.

3. DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE THAT DUTCH WORKED FOR MORE THAN A YEAR TO ASSEMBLE EXHIBIT. OUTSTANDING DUTCH HISTORIANS AND ART EXPERTS ASSISTED IN ITS PREPARATION, AND THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY ABOUT IT HERE. DUTCH HAVE REPEATEDLY GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO COOPERATE WITH US IN CONNECTION WITH CELEBRATION OF BICENTENNIAL. IT WOULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE IF THIS PROBLEM CANNOT BE PROMPTLY SOLVED, AND EMBASSY HOPES DEPARTMENT WILL DO ALL IT CAN TO MEET LEGITIMATE DUTCH CONCERNS.
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